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II. SOCIOLOGY.

The Theory of Imitation in Sociology.—In an article contributed to the April number of *Mind* by Sydney Ball, and in another to the May number of the *American Journal of Sociology* by Dr. Ellwood, recent contributions to sociological literature are analyzed and criticised. Dr. Ellwood considers the theory of imitation in social psychology, and after discussing and comparing the work of Professor J. Mark Baldwin and Mr. Tarde, he concludes that the shortcomings of the theory of imitation as the method of social organization and progress are: "(1) It cannot sufficiently explain the manifest limitations in the process of imitation without introducing other factors in the method of development; (2) it creates a gulf between human society and the societies of the animal world which are organized upon a basis of instinct; (3) it makes no allowance for the process of natural selection to bring about gradual changes in human society; (4) it rests upon no sufficient basis of ascertained facts, but has apparently been built up by a fallacious method of reasoning. In general, our criticism of the imitation theory is that it makes the social process something apart from the life process. It does not link, in any definite way, the forces which are moulding human society to-day with the forces which have shaped evolution in the past."

Sydney Ball discusses current sociology based upon the recent contributions of Alengry, Tarde, Baldwin, Bosanquet and Giddings. He considers the question "Is it (sociology) really a science, or is it more than a name for a science which may or may not some day come into existence?" Giddings believes "that the time has come when its principles, accurately formulated and adequately verified, can be organized into a coherent theory." This the writer denies, claiming that the contributions to sociological theory have been merely essays "to find the handle of a science." Alengry comes out with a cry back to Comte. He criticises Comte's point of view, claiming that his great error consisted in emphasizing the laws of succession as compared with those of coexistence. In the diverse character of the sociological literature of the present the author finds the only thing in common to be the rejection of the biological method. Emphasis is now put upon the psychological interpretation of social phenomena, and the writer devotes considerable attention to Baldwin and Tarde. The work of the latter is mentioned as a protest against the identification of sociology with the philosophy of history. The work of the psychological school is described as an endeavor to find a unifying

principle to which the complex social phenomena may be reduced. Tarde looks for imitation to do for sociology what the infinitesimal calculus does for mathematics. Giddings finds the fundamental sociological element to be consciousness of kind. The writer argues that the theories based upon imitation or consciousness of kind are theories rather of association, or of contact between individuals, than of society as such or of society organized as a state. "The process of social organization is not one of imitation, but of adjustment of members in and to a social whole." In answer to the question propounded at the outset the author concludes that "a careful study of professedly sociological literature, interesting and suggestive as it often is, has only confirmed my conviction that sociology has still got to make good its scientific pretensions, and more especially its claim to absorb ethics and economics, to say nothing of other studies."

After such a careful canvass of sociological literature one is not a little disappointed at the conclusion expressed by the writer. The answer to the question as to whether sociology is or is not a science naturally depends upon what we mean by science. The representatives of the so-called exact sciences have always doubted the propriety of dignifying by the name of science any other body of knowledge than that represented by themselves. As a matter of fact different degrees of certainty exist in different fields of knowledge, and the degree of certainty necessary to delimit "science" from speculation is a question of terminology, that is an academic question of little or no consequence. Sociology is now going through the stage which all sciences have or must pass through. It is generally recognized that there is a great field for investigation here, and that the most successful methods employed must be determined by a process of elimination. This process is going on now in sociology, and to a greater or less extent in all sciences. There is nothing new in this, and it is to be regretted that so much effort is wasted in an endeavor to determine whether sociology is or is not a science. In this connection it is interesting to compare the aims of the writers of the articles just considered. Dr. Ellwood considers a contribution to sociological theory, endeavors to give it due credit, and criticises its shortcomings without bothering himself about whether sociology is or is not a science. Mr. Ball considers contributions from different schools of sociology, endeavors to state their shortcomings, and then upon the basis of this he solves the problem for himself as to whether sociology is or is not a science. Granting that sociological investigations will be pursued until it is generally agreed that sociology is a science, it is not at all likely that future writers will waste much effort in determining at just what stage their study achieved its enviable position.

The Gaming Instinct is the title of an excellent article by Dr. W. I. Thomas, in the May number of the *American Journal of Sociology*. Locomotion is described to be "primarily to enable the animal to reach and grasp food, and also to escape other animals bent on finding food." With "the survival of the most efficient structures," there is developed on the psychical side an interest in the conflict situation as complete and perfect as is the structure itself." Further on we are told that "there could not have been developed an organism depending on offensive and defensive movements for food and life without an interest in what we may call a dangerous or precarious situation." Since the cultural period of life is short in comparison with the prehistorical epoch, there has been consequently but little structural change in the organism to be recorded.

The experience of the reader is appealed to as evidence that conflicts such as matches, games and fights contribute our chief amusements. In frontier districts feuds are still resorted to, not so much because there are no other means of settling disputes, but because they are the most interesting methods. In the development of culture, when skill and cunning came in to supplement brute force in combats the interest was in no wise diminished. In social rather than in individual contests an increasing interest centres. The aim in mechanical inventions is to secure an advantage over nature, and primitive man took almost as much interest in them as in the direct contests themselves. From this point of view the interests of such men as Newton, Helmholtz and Darwin are considered to be identical with those of the inventors of primitive force appliances.

As long as man was in a state of nature his activities were not irksome. The new adjustments which the scarcity of game and the density of population brought about, made his activities more mechanical, habitual and tiresome, but his existence became less precarious. While the habits of industrial society are painful, the consumption of the products of labor is pleasurable. How superficial these race habits are may be seen in the occasional relapse of rich men's sons with the removal of the pressure of need. Tramps and criminals have failed to adjust themselves. Gambling is fascinating because it keeps up conflict activity without drudgery. In business the gaming instinct is expressed in the preference for work where shrewdness is involved, and where there is great uncertainty of success. The gaming instinct is still more expressed in practically monopolizing man's attention during periods of recreation. The article is suggestive and interesting throughout.

The Mathematical Method and von Thünen.—At the International Congress of Instruction in Social Sciences held at Paris last

year, Dr. Leon Winiarsky, of the University of Geneva, read an interesting report on the Teaching of Theoretical Economics in Switzerland. Dr. Winiarsky maintains that Cournot was the first rigorously scientific economist, inasmuch as Cournot, in 1838, first clearly indicated the application of the mathematical method to political economy. Although the matter of priority on this point is scarcely of primary scientific importance, yet credit should be given to whom credit is due; Johann Heinrich von Thünen certainly deserves to be mentioned with Cournot, and perhaps before Cournot, as introducing mathematical methods of investigating social problems.

The first edition of the first part of Thünen's remarkable "*Isolirter Staat in Beziehung auf Landwirthschaft und Nationalökonomie*" was published in 1826. It was characterized by all the essential qualities which since then have earned for its author the uniform appreciation and praise of the historians of economic doctrine. As Rodbertus declared, "von Thünen brought two things into political economy: *figures*, and *formulae*, and *heart*; he united the most exact method with the most humanitarian sentiments—gifts which are rarely joined." Far more important, however, than Thünen's methodological attitude, is the nature of the theories to which his formulæ led him. In an essay published in 1896 on Thünen's theory of value, I attempted to show that he not only, with the aid of mathematics, developed the theory of final utility in all its essential parts as determinative of economic value, but proceeding further upon this theory as a basis, built up a complete doctrine of distribution, including theories of rent, wages, interest and profit—theories which bear a remarkable likeness to the doctrines propounded by modern economists of the marginal utility school.

The historians of economic doctrines have generally made no mention of these Thünen theories; they have, as a rule, confined themselves to a eulogious mention of his more accurate formulation of the Ricardian land-rent theory and a cursory criticism of Thünen's theory of ideal wages. Indeed, some of them, like Roscher, have confused Thünen's theory of ideal wages (wages as they would be regulated in an ideal economic state) with his entirely different and independent theory of actual wages, as they are determined under existing circumstances.¹

¹ Contributed by Dr. C. W. A. Veditz, Philadelphia.